

REMARKS

In paragraph 2 of the final Action claims 1-3, 5, 6 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kawashima et al. In paragraph 3 of the final Action, claims 1-3, 5-7, 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Neupert. In paragraph 4 of the Action, claims 4, 8, 9 and 12 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In view of the rejection and indication of allowability, claims 4 and 8 have been rewritten in independent form. Therefore, claims 4 and 8 are allowable. Claim 1 has been slightly amended to clarify the structure of the invention partly disclosed in claim 4.

Namely, in claim 1, an airbag for protecting an occupant comprises a left half airbag to be deployed on a left side of the occupant, a right half airbag to be deployed on a right side of the occupant, and width constraining means attached to an inner middle area inside the left half airbag and right half airbag, respectively, for constraining lateral widths thereof when the left half airbag and the right half airbag are inflated. In the invention, the left and right half airbags are separated from each other.

Claim 4 has a recitation such that the left half airbag and right half airbag have distal ends facing the occupant, and the distal ends are separated from each other. This recitation in claim 4 is simplified such that the left and right half airbags are separated from each other, and added in claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 does not introduce new issue.

In Kawashima et al., one gas bag 10 includes a strip 20 therein attached side panels to restrict lateral length of the gas bag 10. In the invention, the airbag includes the left and right half airbags separated from each other. However, Kawashima et al. is formed by one gas bag, not two gas bags separated from each other. One gas bag is entirely different from the left and right half airbags separated from each other as clearly recited in claim 1 of the invention. Therefore, claim 1 is not anticipated by Kawashima et al.

In Neupert, a gas bag 3 is formed such that a ring-shaped chamber 18 to be inflated and to be filled with gas is obtained, and the depression 17 is not to be inflated (column 3, lines 15-17). Therefore, the gas bag 3 has a ring shape, and one ring-shaped chamber 18 communicates throughout the entire chamber. In the invention, the left and right half airbags are separated from each other. The ring-shaped chamber 18 of Neupert is entirely different from the left and right half airbags separated from each other in claim 1. Claim 1 of the invention is not anticipated by

Neupert.

As explained above, claim 1 of the invention is not anticipated by Kawashima et al. nor Neupert. The application is patentable over the prior art.

Reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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